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CROWSNEST PASS
recreation study

development program and economic feasibility

Volume 1
concept of development

September 1967

HIGHLIGHTS

Acres was asked by the Alberta Government Travel Bureau to conduct a study of the recreation potential of the Crowsnest Pass area of Alberta including a site analysis, a market analysis, a development programme and the economic impact of the programme.

Continuous expansion of the major tourist attractions in the Province of Alberta will create the most favourable conditions for recreation development in the Crowsnest Pass.

The development of recreation facilities in the Crowsnest Pass should contribute to a widening of the scope of activities offered in the Alberta mountain region as a whole.

New facilities should contribute to a lengthening of the travel season.

New facilities in the Crowsnest Pass should be easily accessible from Highway 3.

The new facilities should not compete directly with the national parks.

New attractions should exploit the uniqueness of the Crowsnest Pass.

The colourful history of the Crowsnest Pass should be exploited for summer recreation development. The natural capabilities of parts of the Pass area for outdoor recreation would form a desirable complement ot that kind of development.

About 244,500 visitors travelled through the Crowsnest Pass in 1966. About 521,000 visitors are expected in 1976.

A small historical town, reminiscent of the old town of Frank, should be developed at the site of the Frank Slide.

A trail should be constructed to the site of the former town of Lille through the Gold Creek Canyon.

The development will require public investment and operation. The total investment required is estimated at $2.1 million. Although the initial investment may not be recovered, the annual operating expenses should be covered by the annual operating revenues.

The development of an historical complex would have a substantial economic impact. About $1.7 million would be spent by tourists in the Crowsnest Pass in 1974, as a result of the historical complex. About 142 new full-time jobs would be created earning close to $1 million in 1974. About 215 new hotel/motel rooms would be required in that year and about 228 campsites. Altogether, at least $2.6 million additional investment in summer recreation facilities by private enterprise will be economically feasible.

Subject to confirmation from research into meteorological conditions, Bluff Mountain offers excellent prospects for ski development.

About 30,000 skiers could be attracted to the Pass in the 1969-1970 season. This figure is expected to grow to about 90,000 in the 1975-1976 season. A market of this size would permit the investment of about $1.3 million in ski facilities. An important advantage of a ski development on Bluff Mountain, over other ski areas in the province, is its proximity to existing community facilities and accommodation.

A ski development would be an important factor in sustaining the summer employment requirements during the winter season. The expenditures by skiers in the Crowsnest Pass during the 1974-1975 season are estimated at approximately $1.65 million.

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INTRODUCTION - The Scope, Purpose and Limitations of the Study

Recognizing the potential of the Crowsnest Pass for recreation development, the Alberta Government Travel Bureau commissioned Acres to carry out a feasibility study. The objective of the study is to prepare an economically feasible preliminary development concept which will maximize the recreation potential of the area.

Site surveys were made (in April and June, 1967) to determine the natural capacities for skiing and summer recreation. The opportunities for that type of development are described in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 2, the potential market for recreation facilities in the Crowsnest Pass is discussed in relation to the provincial market. Full use was made of studies carried out and sponsored by the Alberta Government.

The recreation development recommendations and the economic impact analysis are described in Chapter 3. The impact on the economy of the Pass by increased tourist expenditures is expressed in terms of the accommodation demanded and the income and employment generated. Detailed calculations of the feasibility of selected facilities were provided because of high interest rates and the high risk nature of the tourist industry. These are included in Appendices A and B in Volume 2.

The strategy of development is discussed in Chapter 4. The findings of the study may form the basis for planning developments similar to those for which feasibility calculations were carried out. In other cases, the lack of adequate data makes further research necessary.

The cooperative effort of many public agencies has made possible the compilation of information presented in the report. The scope of the problems related to the development of recreation in the Crowsnest Pass is reflected in the following listing of agencies which have contributed to the study:

Alberta Bureau of Statistics
Alberta Government Travel Bureau
Department of Highways
Department of Industry and Development
Department of Lands and Forests
Department of Municipal Affairs
Department of Youth
Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board
Water Resources Division
Old Man River Regional Planning Commission

1 - SITE ANALYSIS

1.1 - Location of the Crowsnest Pass in the Alberta Mountain Region

The Alberta mountain region is one of the most popular tourist regions in the country. Every summer, an increasing number of travellers from all parts of North America visit the area.[1] Roads, lodging and recreation facilities are used heavily during the peak period (July and August) and the most sought after places are often congested.

The activities engaged in by the summer tourists,[2] apart from sight-seeing and motoring, include fishing, swimming, hiking, golfing, boating and picnicing. The conditions in the region for these activities are almost ideal. The summer climate is pleasant, facilities are well developed, and accessibility is good. In recent years, winter recreation added to the range of facilities offered in many locations. The number of persons involved is still modest[3] in comparison with the large summer market. However, the developing winter market has relieved some of the problems of a short summer travel season.

In the immediate future (to 1976), the summer market is expected to more than double in size. The winter market will almost triple[4] in size. New facilities will be required in areas where congestion can be measured. Many of the new facilities should be located in areas that will open up new sections of the mountain region and divert some of the traffic now focussing on the points of congestion.

The Crowsnest Pass is located in the heart of the Alberta mountain region. It possesses many of the amenities for which the region is famous. Access to the Pass is good.

If its recreation potential is developed, the Pass area could play a significant role in spreading the future tourist traffic over a wider area.

The main poles of attraction in the Alberta mountain region are Banff, Jasper and Waterton Lakes National Parks. Banff and Jasper are accessible via the Trans-Canada Highway. Waterton Lakes is adjacent to the United States border. Banff and Jasper contain large amounts of space untouched by recreation development. Consequently, adequate opportunities still exist in both parks to develop new recreation facilities that may relieve the congestion occurring in some points. In Waterton Lakes, the available space is used more intensely.[5] The park may soon reach the stage where its presently developed area is overloaded during July and August.

Development of recreation potential in the Crowsnest Pass should not be based on the speculation that the national parks will not plan or act to alleviate present congestion. Any decline in the ability of the national parks to attract large numbers of tourists will be detrimental to the tourist industry in all of Alberta. Further development of the national parks, therefore, would seem desirable for the growth of tourism in Alberta and would also create the best opportunities for Crowsnest Pass.

Development outside the national parks should consist of an attempt to create facilities which enhance the drawing power of the mountain region as a whole. This can be accomplished by adding new elements to the range of recreational facilities in the region which are not merely duplications of facilities in the parks. The new elements should be within the scope of outdoor recreation.

1.2 - Access

The areas surveyed for recreation development potential in the Crowsnest Pass extended between Burmis and the British Columbia boundary. It covered a band ten miles in width, with Highway 3 running through the centre. The highway is part of the Alberta provincial network of roads and connects with the British Columbia network. It provides good access to the Pass area. It is not a first class highway in all places, but the route through the Pass area is attractive and provides the traveller with something of a "mountain experience." This characteristic reflects a certain harmony between the landscape and the routing of the road. It is a valuable asset. Highway improvements should attempt to maintain or emphasize this harmony wherever possible. The distance that can be travelled on Highway 3 through the Crowsnest Pass area is about fifteen miles.

Access to the Pass is also provided by the gravel Crowsnest Forest trunk road or Kananaskis road. The road is little used. It has great potential as a tourist route, but a solution must be found which alleviates the dust clouds created by automobile traffic. It forms an "all mountain" connection between Coleman and Banff National Park and offers many spectacular views. The extension of this road from Coleman to Waterton Lakes National Park would open a new and attractive route between the two national parks. The new mountain road would stimulate attendance in each of the parks and be an attraction in itself. With the new road, the Crowsnest Pass would find itself on the crossing of a major east-west connection and an important north-south tourist route. The implications for tourist development in the Pass have not been analyzed, but are expected to be substantial.

1.3 - The Tourist Industry in the Crowsnest Pass

The booming activity in the Alberta mountain region during the summer does not affect the Pass. The tourist industry contributes only moderately to the area's income. The economy of the Pass has been supported by coal mining and other extractive industries for many decades. Following the decline of mining, the Pass area managed to build a more diverse economic base by attracting industry. Stable employment and a steady income is again available to many residents. That achievement is probably unique in the Alberta mountain region, and is an important consideration in planning the future of the Pass area. It is also indicative of the difficulties Pass residents have had in attempting to derive a reliable income from the tourist trade.

Between 230 and 240 hotel/motel rooms are available in the communities of the pass.[6] About 160 are supplied by the hotels found in the centres of the towns of Bellevue, Blairmore and Coleman. They are older establishments lacking some of the services and facilities required to penetrate effectively the tourist market. A brief survey of hotel/motel owners in the Pass indicated that the older hotels do not cater to the tourist trade. The remaining 70 rooms are divided among eight establishments scattered through the area.

The quality of accommodation offered by the latter 70 rooms varies. Some of the higher quality rooms are part of establishments that are open all year, and where construction standards and services offered are generally better than in the establishments open only during the summer season. However, the hotel/motel industry in the Pass area is not capable of offering the first class accommodation that is required for the tourist trade.

Many of the establishments are operating at low profit levels or at a net loss, and have done so for a number of years. They are all owner operated, and some are owner built. The personnel, apart from the owner, is often recruited from within the owner's family, and kept at a minimum. The owner's working day extends beyond the level acceptable to hired personnel. The operation in most cases provides the owner with extra income. Calculated at an hourly rate, his earnings are not in proportion with the risks he is prepared to take; they are not sufficient to attract investment.

This state of affairs is responsible for the quality of accommodation, which in turn affects his market penetration rate. The majority of tourists are of urban origin. Therefore, the type of overnight accommodation and restaurants should be comparable to facilities available in urban centres. Growing tourist traffic may not necessarily improve occupancies in establishments which offer poor quality accommodation.

Even when adequate market penetration is achieved, the tourist season in the Pass is too short (two months) to support high quality facilities. The average length of stay is about one night. The activity generated by business and industry is not capable of maintaining adequate occupancy levels during the rest of the year in all establishments. A number of them are forced to close for many months.

One hundred camping sites are available in the Pass.[7] Half are provided by the province and half by private enterprise. The campground operated by private enterprise is new. It is equipped with a swimming pool, cooking facilities, water, electricity, modern shower and washroom facilities and children's play areas. The campground is attractively located on the south bank of the Crowsnest River, close to the town of Blairmore. It is a popular spot with a high number of repeat visits. The owner is planning to double its capacity in the near future.

1.4 - Site Survey

Four main guidelines for fieldwork in the Crowsnest Pass were established. Recreation development in the Pass should add to the scope of facilities offered in the mountain region, avoid, where possible, direct competition with the national parks, increase the length of the travel season and be readily accessible from Highway 3.

The area was visited in mid April, 1967, to study ski potential, and during the last week of June, 1967, to examine summer recreation potential.

1.5 - Summer Recreation

The summer climate in the Crowsnest Pass appears favourable for the development of outdoor recreation facilities. Both temperature and precipitation are comparable to the conditions found in the Alberta mountain region as a whole. Wind velocity data[8] indicate that sites directly exposed to the western wind may be unsuitable for development of recreation facilities.

The best known attraction of the Pass area is the Frank Slide. This is the only point where tourists consistently stop for a closer look. Most stops last a few minutes. The business centre of the town of Blairmore ranks second after the Frank Slide in the number of stops. Several of the shops in Blairmore have attractive facades and interiors which are reminiscent of the 1920's. The preservation of the shops and the adaptation of their general design to other stores and buildings along Blairmore's main street (Highway 3) could stimulate the town's role as a tourist shopping centre.

There are few other points along Highway 3 in the Crowsnest Pass which induce tourists to stop. The urban centres are unattractive and suggest a depressed mining town. The scenery is attractive but less impressive than in some parts of the national parks. The attempts to exploit whatever scenic views the landscape offers are negligible. The traffic on Highway 3 is forced to keep moving because of narrow road shoulders and a lack of parking space. There is little to tell the tourist that he is travelling through an area with a long varied history and many points of interest.

There is a significant difference between the Pass area and other parts of the Alberta mountain region. The Pass has been settled for almost a century and has played an important role in the economy of Western Canada. The remains of various economic functions performed in the Pass dot the landscape. Most of the economic activity occurred in communities at the east end of the Pass. With the exception of the Frank Slide and its immediate surroundings, little space is left in this area for outdoor recreation facilities. A powerful mineral spring is located in the vicinity of the Slide, next to the old townsite of Frank. The sulphur containing water from the spring was used for mineral baths a number of decades ago. Heated mineral pools are profitable enterprises in other parts of the mountain region. The pools add to the attractions and lengthen the travel season. Construction of a heated mineral pool in the east end of the Pass would be economically feasible if it could draw from a large tourist market.

Immediately north of Blairmore, a recently abandoned coalmine penetrates the base of Bluff Mountain. The mine and its equipment, set in an appropriate surrounding of mine dumps, appears in good condition. Part of the tunnel complex could be developed for mine tours. The location with respect to Highway 3 is very favourable. Considerable investment may be necessary and an enterprise of this nature would also require access to a large tourist market.

The area between Blairmore and Coleman that is suitable for building will probably be required for urban expansion in the next decade. West of Coleman, the Pass opens up into an attractive area of natural parkland surrounded by high mountains. Part of the area, when preserved against further invasion of industrial or urban uses, could be developed as a natural park with trails along the Crowsnest River. A picnic site could be located on the small island formed by the river. The attractions of this natural park include beautiful scenery, fast running pure mountain streams, interesting wildlife (i.e., beaverdams) and lush valley bottom vegetation. A parking lot could be located adjacent to Highway 3. To ensure preservation of the area in its present state, it is recommended that the Crowsnest Forest Reserve south of the highway be extended to include this area (see Plate 3).

Towards the Crowsnest Lake, north of the highway, very attractive terrain would permit the development of camping sites. Part of the area is naturally suited for a high-quality 18-hole golf course. The heavily wooded Allison Creek basin and the surrounding mountains provide excellent hiking opportunities.

The Crowsnest Lake is suitable for boating and fishing. But it is too cold for swimming and water-skiing. Its eastern shores are windswept and unsuitable for recreation development of any kind. Opportunities are abundant for mountaineering in the west end of the Pass area. A great variety of slopes and challenges are available on Sentry, Tecumseh and Crowsnest Mountains. The top of Tent Mountain can be reached by automobile. The view from the top could be developed into a significant attraction.

The natural capabilities for outdoor recreation development in the Pass area, west of Coleman, are substantial. The capabilities, reviewed briefly, do not meet the four conditions that need to be fulfilled to make recreation development in the Pass successful. Heated mineral pools could

lengthen the travel season, but require a large tourist market. Without this market, redevelopment of the Blairmore mine is out of the question. The outdoor recreation potential in the west of the Pass would be in direct competition with the national parks. Development of all these opportunities combined would not widen the scope of recreation facilities in the Alberta mountain region. They could be a desirable complement to a development capable of creating a tourist market in the Pass.

As shown in Chapter 2, a large number of tourists are travelling through the Crowsnest Pass each summer. These tourists do not form a "market" at present because few stop long enough to make development of any physical capabilities mentioned previously worthwhile.

The opportunity to develop recreational facilities that are complementary rather than directly competitive with summer attractions offered elsewhere in the province seems wide open. Care should be taken that new tourist developments in the Pass exploit the uniqueness of the potential offered by the Crowsnest Pass in full. Its relative location to the main tourist stream through the province, and the possibility of duplication of developments or expansion of attractions in areas more favourably located, seems a strong argument for planning of attractions that are peculiar to the Crowsnest Pass.

After considering the various possibilities and opportunities, it became clear that the main potential for summer recreation development in the Crowsnest Pass lies in the exploitation of its colourful history. The form that this exploitation might take is a small historical town which recreates the atmosphere of the Pass at the turn of the century. It may best be located on the old townsite of Frank. There it could make full use of the events in the Pass around the time that the Slide occurred. It is recommended that the Slide be part of the complex. A third element might be formed by a trail along Gold Creek to the old townsite of Lille.

The type of development foreseen would require public investment and operation. The initial investment may not be recouperated. The annual operating expenditures would have to be covered in full by the operating revenues. The initial public investment must be justified by the economic impact on the Crowsnest Pass.

The Frank Slide covers an area of about 1,540 acres. It could be developed as an interesting geological and historical exhibit. Trails for walking and horseback riding could be constructed to connect points of interest such as individual rocks, the remains of the old mine, the lake that was formed, the old mine entrance and the airshaft (see Plate 2). The slide is now used as a source of rocks and gravel and as a garbage dump.

The town visualized is a replica of the old town of Frank around 1903. It had a frontier appearance which mixed the western mining and pioneering atmosphere in a blend peculiar to the Pass area. The authentic reconstruction of the town in a compact settlement next to the Frank Slide, offering attractions and activities which involve visitors physically and emotionally, would create a new major mode of interest in the mountain region. It would also lengthen the travel season with special exhibits in June and September. Construction and reconstruction of about 30 buildings, boardwalks and hitching racks would probably be involved in the project. A number of antique cars could be added to the scene.

In the development programme and cost estimates for the historical town, two buildings are included that were not part of the old town of Frank. One is a museum/visitor centre that will allow ample opportunity to advertise other attractions and facilities in the Pass. The mining section of the museum could be related to the tours through the Blairmore mine. The quality and authenticity of the complex will have a most important effect on the promotion of hotel/ motel and other recreational facilities in the Pass area. The number of people staying overnight in the Pass will depend on the job done by the historical town as the major element of the complex.

The trail leading up the canyon of the Gold Creek to Lille could be a most attractive nature trail, suitable for walking and horseback riding. The remains of the old town of Lille are clearly recognizable. The area is also a suitable site for an authentic Indian summer camp or village.

The market penetration rates of the complex are calculated in Chapter 3. The average length of stay of a visitor is estimated at two hours. This would create the market required for the development of other facilities. It would lead to greatly increased demand for overnight accommodation (hotels/motels and camping) in the Pass. It would make the development of a summer recreation complex in the Allison Creek basin economically feasible. The historical complex would attract within the forecast period the market required for development of a heated mineral swimming pool, and for mine tours through the old Blairmore mine. Its economic impact in terms of income and employment would be substantial. For these reasons, it is recommended that the establishment of an historical complex in the Crowsnest Pass as outlined in Chapter 3, Development Programme, be considered.

1.6 - Ski Potential

The results of the ski survey are subject to further research into meteorological conditions. However, a number of slopes in the Pass area offer potential for ski development. About 24 inches of settled snow is required for good skiing, along with long hours of sunshine, an average temperature between 15 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit, and a low average wind velocity. Very good to excellent slopes for a major resort type ski development were found in the southwest, west, north and east sides of Bluff Mountain. Good slopes exist on the eastern side of Mount Coulthard and Mount Tecumseh. During the field survey, conditions for skiing were excellent, particularly on Bluff Mountain. No data on snow cover and wind conditions between December 15 and April 1 (the peak skiing season) are available for the three mountains.

The mount Coulthard and Mount Tecumseh slopes do not offer adequate space for developing the type of ski facilities capable of attracting a significant part of the Alberta ski market. The maximum vertical drop is about 1,500 feet, the slopes above 6,500 feet are steep, rocky and avalanche-prone. In addition, a new road would be required to permit access to the base of the lifts by car. On the other hand, the southwest slope of Bluff Mountain is readily accessible from the town of Blairmore. It offers an ample supply of skiable terrain for novice, intermediate and expert skiers. The maximum vertical drop is about 2,700 feet with no avalanche danger. The northern and eastern slopes are also avalanche free. An important advantage of Bluff Mountain over Mount Coulthard and Mount Tecumseh is its proximity to exisiting community facilities and overnight accommodation. The base of the lifts (on the southwest slope) will be outside the Crowsnest Forest Reserve. Development in this area is not subject to the building restrictions which tend to hamper development of ski resorts in other Alberta areas.

If meteorological conditions are favourable during the winter season, ski development on Bluff Mountain could add a dimension to its facilities, unique in the Alberta mountian region. The close relationship between a high quality ski area, existing community facilities, accommodation, and building land free of development restrictions cannot be duplicated in the national parks or the forest reserves. Skillful development of the mountain and the base area may create a major ski resort strongly competitive with all other resorts in Alberta. However, if the snow cover on the southwest slopes of Bluff Mountain is unreliable, or if other meteorological conditions are unfavourable, the lifts would have to be relocated to the north or east of the mountain. In that case, an access road would be required and at least part of the base area would be within the Crowsnest Forest Reserve.

A healthy ski development in the Crowsnest Pass is of crucial importance to the development of the tourist industry as a whole. It is recommended that the necessary meteorological observations begin as soon as possible.

1.7 - A Note on Site Planning

The recreation developments analyzed in this report are all represented on conceptual site plans (Plates 1, 2, and 3). The sites selected for the various uses are suited to accommodate the use assigned to them. No site selection was made for the new hotels and motels required within the forecast period. The urban renewal study projected for the communities in the Pass would provide an opportunity to plan for the location of new hotels and motels in relation to existing or new communities and facilities. However, the spreading of highway commercial development should be avoided.

CHAPTER 1 - REFERENCES

1 - In the summer of 1966, almost three million visitors were registered in three Alberta national parks (Banff, Jasper, Waterton Lakes) see Volume 2, Appendix A, Table 1.

2 - The terms visitor, tourist and traveller are used widely throughout the report. Unless specified otherwise, they refer to a person travelling for recreation purposes.

3 - During the 1966-1967 season, 286,140 skier visits were measured in six major Alberta ski areas, see Volume 2, Appendix A, Table 7.

4 - See Volume 2, Appendix A, Tables 1 and 6.

5 - See, for example, J. W. Thorsell - Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Use Survey 1966, Introduction and Gate Survey Analysis; Recreational Research Report No. 24, Parks Planning Division, Natural and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

6 - Alberta Government Travel Bureau: Alberta Accommodation Guide, 1967.

7 - June 1967, fieldwork.

8 - Department of Transport, Meteorological Branch.

2 - AN ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST MARKET IN THE CROWSNEST PASS

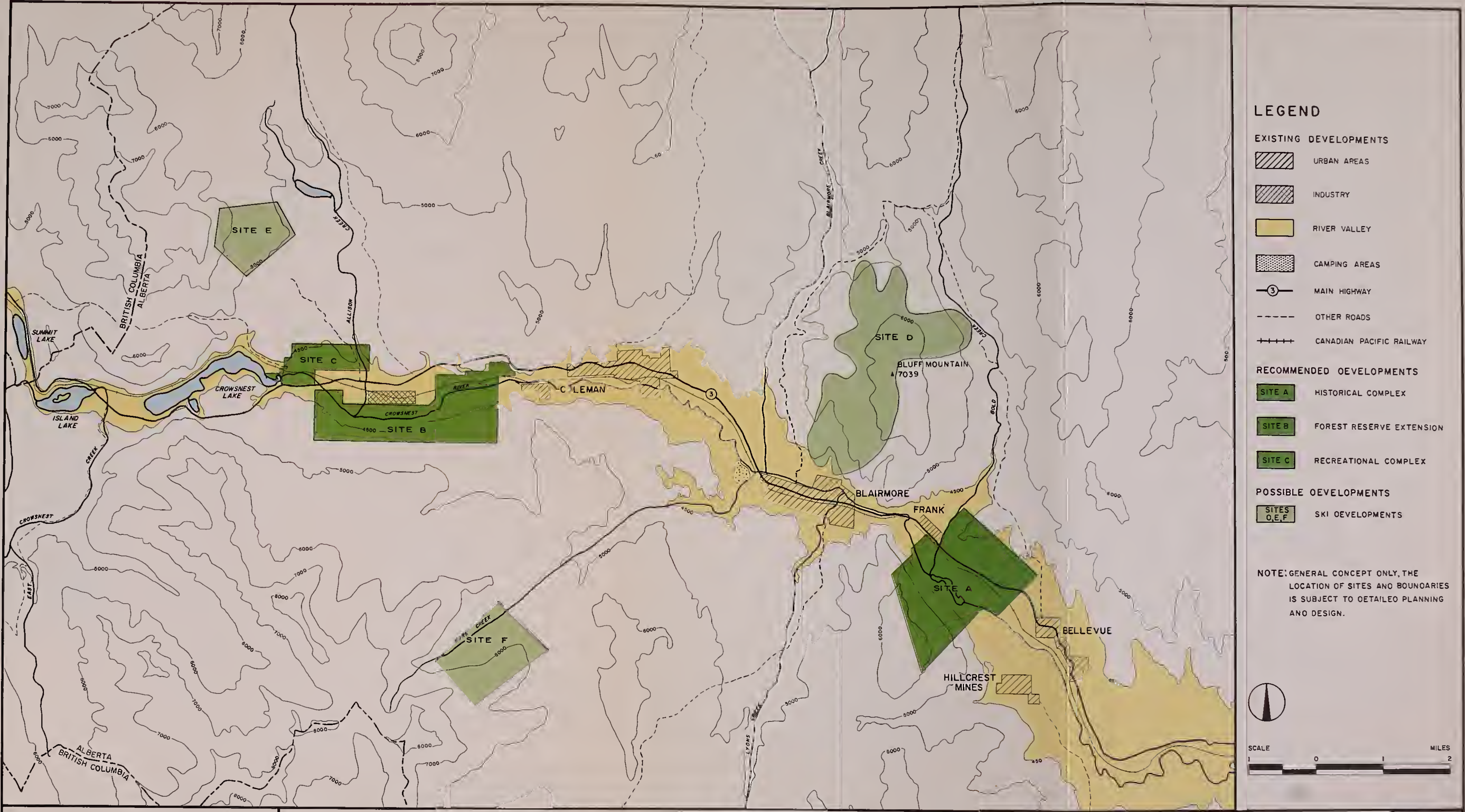
This chapter reviews the methods used and the main results of the market analysis. Detailed calculations are found in Appendix A.

An analysis of demand affecting development of recreation facilities in the Crowsnest Pass should take account of the local situation as well as the developments and attractions in other parts of the Province of Alberta. An appraisal of the effect of the geographic or locational aspect should begin with an examination of tourism and recreation in a broad regional setting.

2.1 - Changing Recreational Patterns

Over a period of time, demand for recreation is affected by broad changes in the social and economic patterns of population. The increasing demand for outdoor recreation and tourist activities is dependent upon changes in such things as growing population, increased leisure time, increased amounts of discretionary disposable personal income, and increased mobility.

Probably the most sophisticated appraisal of the changes in demand for outdoor recreational activities of various kinds are contained in study report 26 of the U.S. Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission published in 1962.[1] The study considered the effects on participation rates in various recreational activities of a number of variable factors. These included population changes, family income, education, occupation, place of residence, age-sex distribution of the population, changes in available leisure time, and changes in the amount of available recreation activities. The study indicated that significant changes in recreation participation are occurring.



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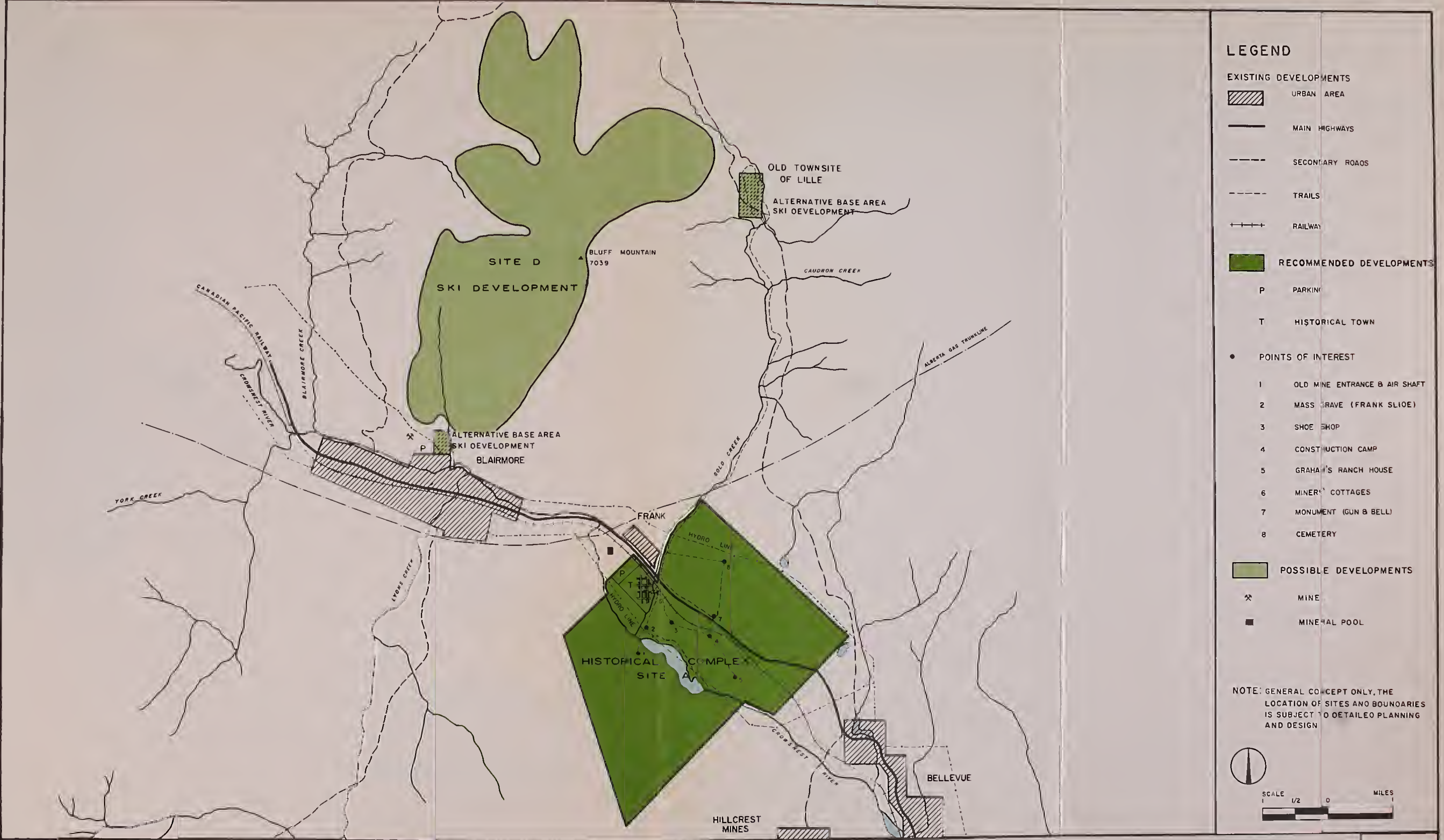
CROWSNEST PASS

GENERAL SITE PLAN

SEPTEMBER 1967

1



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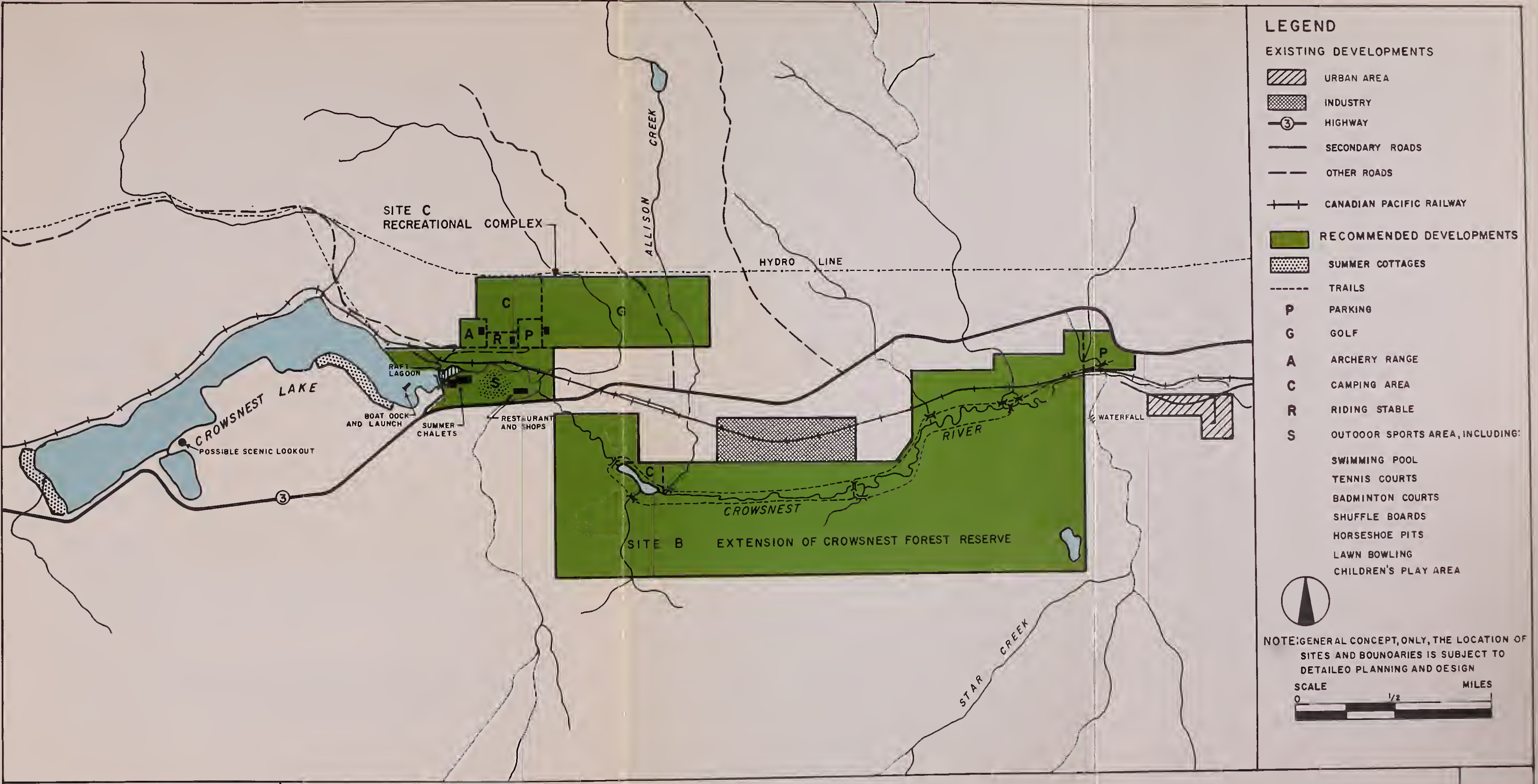
CROWSNEST PASS

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT – EAST END

2



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CROWSNEST PASS

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT — WEST END

3

A more recent study by Travel Research International Incorporated[2] substantiated the findings of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. In the future, more people will have the time and the money to travel farther and participate more in recreation activities. Shorter work weeks, more vacation time and earlier retirement will provide more leisure time. Better education may stimulate the desire to travel. Rising incomes will probably permit increased spending on recreational pursuits. Long weekend vacations will increase as the practice of dividing vacation time into two or more vacation trips grows more popular. Children have a strong influence on the selection of the trip destination. Development of new recreation facilities and opportunities will stimulate travel and recreational participation.

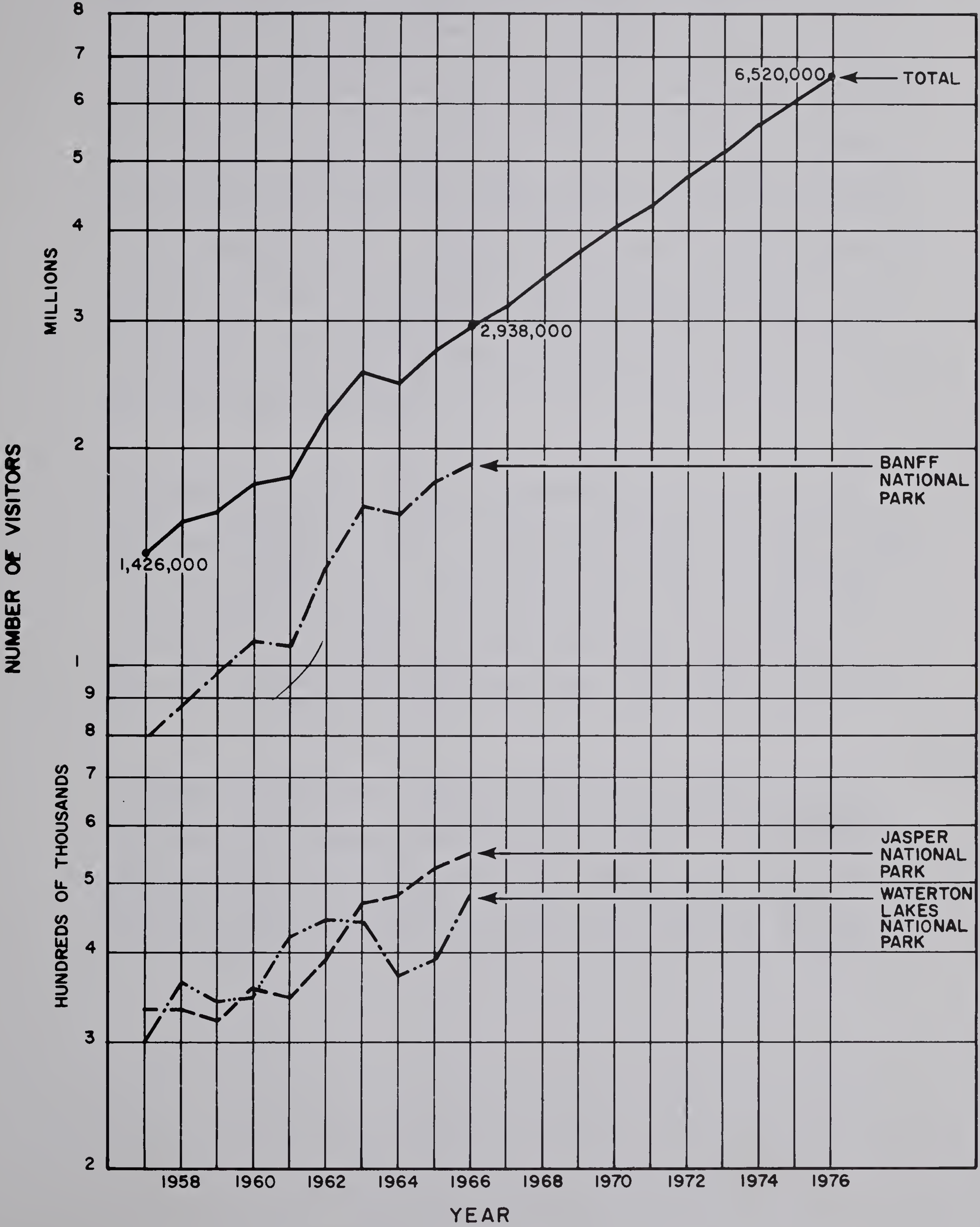
The main implications arising from these trends for planning of recreation facilities in the Crowsnest Pass are that: (1) an important part of the visitors to the Pass will desire to engage themselves actively, and (2) that children form an important part of the market. The average visit can be expected to be short.

2.2 - Trends in Recreation and Tourism in Alberta

An appraisal of the Alberta regional travel and recreational characteristics began with an examination of trends in recreation and tourism in Alberta. Only one time series of relevant statistics was found: the annual total number of visitors to three national parks in Alberta between 1957 and 1966 presented in Figure 1.

Of interest is the sharp increase in the total number of visitors to Banff and Jasper National Parks which began in 1962. The increase is attributed largely to the completion in 1962 of large sections of the Trans-Canada Highway.

FIGURE I THE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THREE NATIONAL PARKS IN ALBERTA AND A PROJECTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS TO 1976



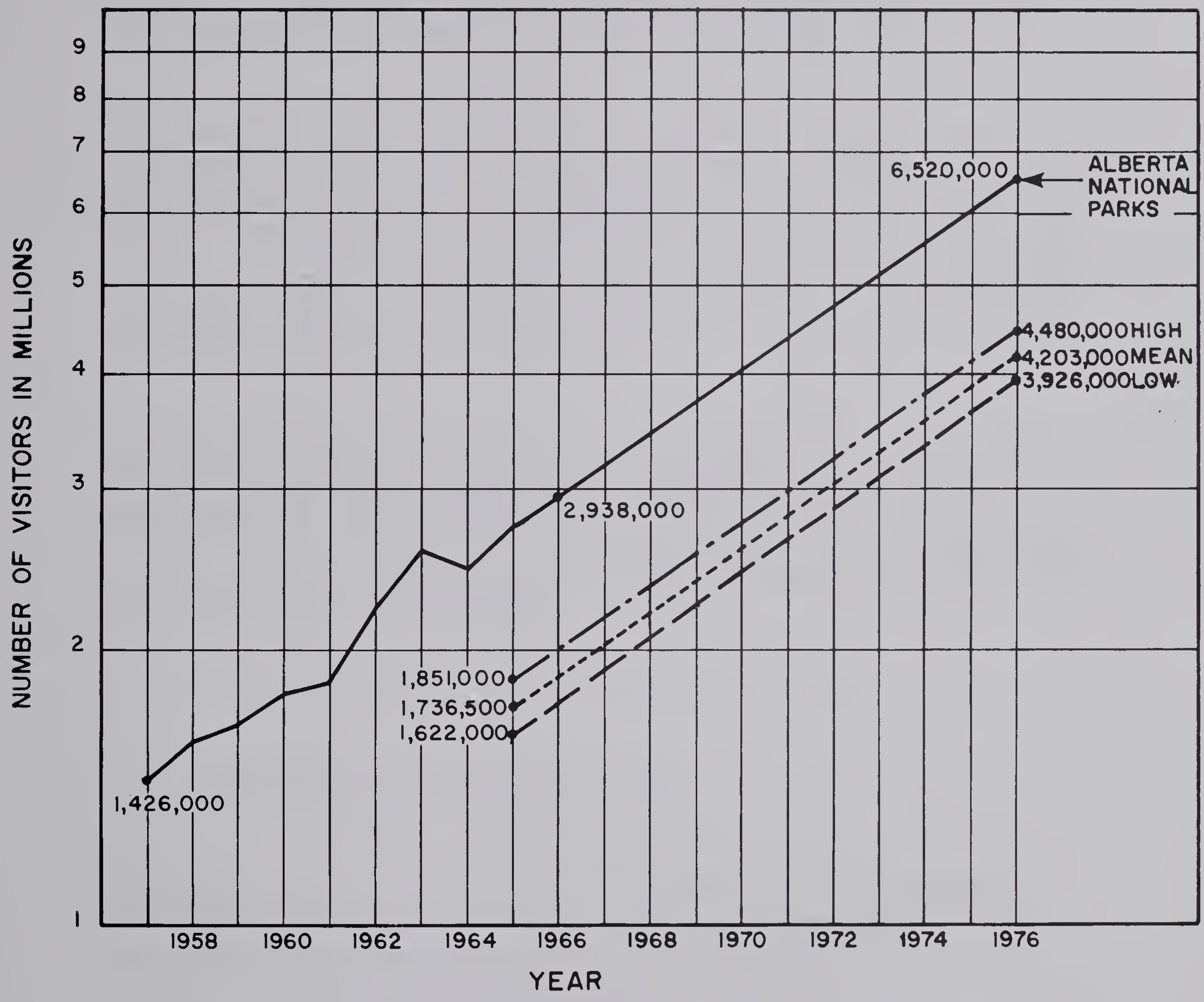
SOURCES: CANADA YEARBOOKS (QUEENS PRINTER, OTTAWA) AND J W THORSELL - OP. CIT, APPENDIX III

The persistent growth in park visits is consistent with the experience in outdoor recreation and tourist facilities throughout North America. However, the trends in recreation and tourism in the Province of Alberta are not as well documented with statistics as are trends in other regions. In a study of non-resident travel in Alberta, the out-of-province visitors numbered 1,125,000 during the 100-day season between May 28 and September 5, 1966.[3] According to a study of interprovincial travel in Canada, by McDonald Research Limited (covering the 12 months preceding October, 1965), about 64 per cent of all travel on trips of 100 miles or more for vacation and recreational purposes, takes place during this 100-day period.[4] It would appear that the total number of out-of-province visitors in 1966 was around 1,750,000 (1,125,000 x 100/64). This figure includes visits for vacation, business, visiting and other purposes.

McDonald Research Limited discovered that a total of 1,190,000 Canadians travelled to Alberta in the 12 months preceding October, 1965. According to the report on non-resident travel,[5] 64.3 per cent of all out-of-province visitors to Alberta were Canadian. The remaining one-third originated in the United States (only about 1.5 per cent of all visitors came from other countries). The total number of out-of-province visitors to Alberta in 1965 was around 1,850,000 (1,190,000 x 100/64.3).

In order to develop a time series for out-of-province visits to Alberta, a constant relationship for the next ten years was assumed between the number of out-of-province visitors and the number of visitors to the three national parks in Alberta. This allowed use of the national park attendance statistics to project the number of out-of-province visitors to Alberta (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OUT-OF-PROVINCE VISITORS TO ALBERTA, 1965—1976



2.3 - Travel Through the Crowsnest Pass

A combination of the information provided by the non-resident travel study[6] and the interprovincial travel study[7] resulted in an estimate of 174,300 out-of-province visitors travelling through the Crowsnest Pass in 1966. The number of tourists originating in Alberta are expected to boost the total to about 242,000.[8]

The traffic counts kept by the Alberta Department of Highways may be used as an alternative method to estimate the number of tourists travelling through the Pass in 1966.[9] The estimate (based on the assumption that the traffic pattern registered by a permanent road counter near the junction of Highways 2 and 3 is relevant for the Pass) amounts to 247,000.

A third method of estimating the number of tourists travelling through the Pass is based on information published by the Alberta Government Travel Bureau in a 1964 Travel Survey.[10] The findings are substantiated by the non-resident travel study.[11] The estimate for the year 1964 is 194,069.

2.4 - Present Market Penetration

About 38 per cent of all out-of-province visitors to southwestern Alberta (Zone 1) stay overnight.[12] In Waterton Lakes National Park, more than 50 per cent of all visitors stay overnight.[13] The Crowsnest Pass is much below these averages.

As indicated in Chapter 2, Site Analysis, the Pass area possesses about 70 hotel/motel rooms with a potential to cater to the tourist trade. The average occupancy, during the peak travel months (July and August) is estimated at about 75 per cent.

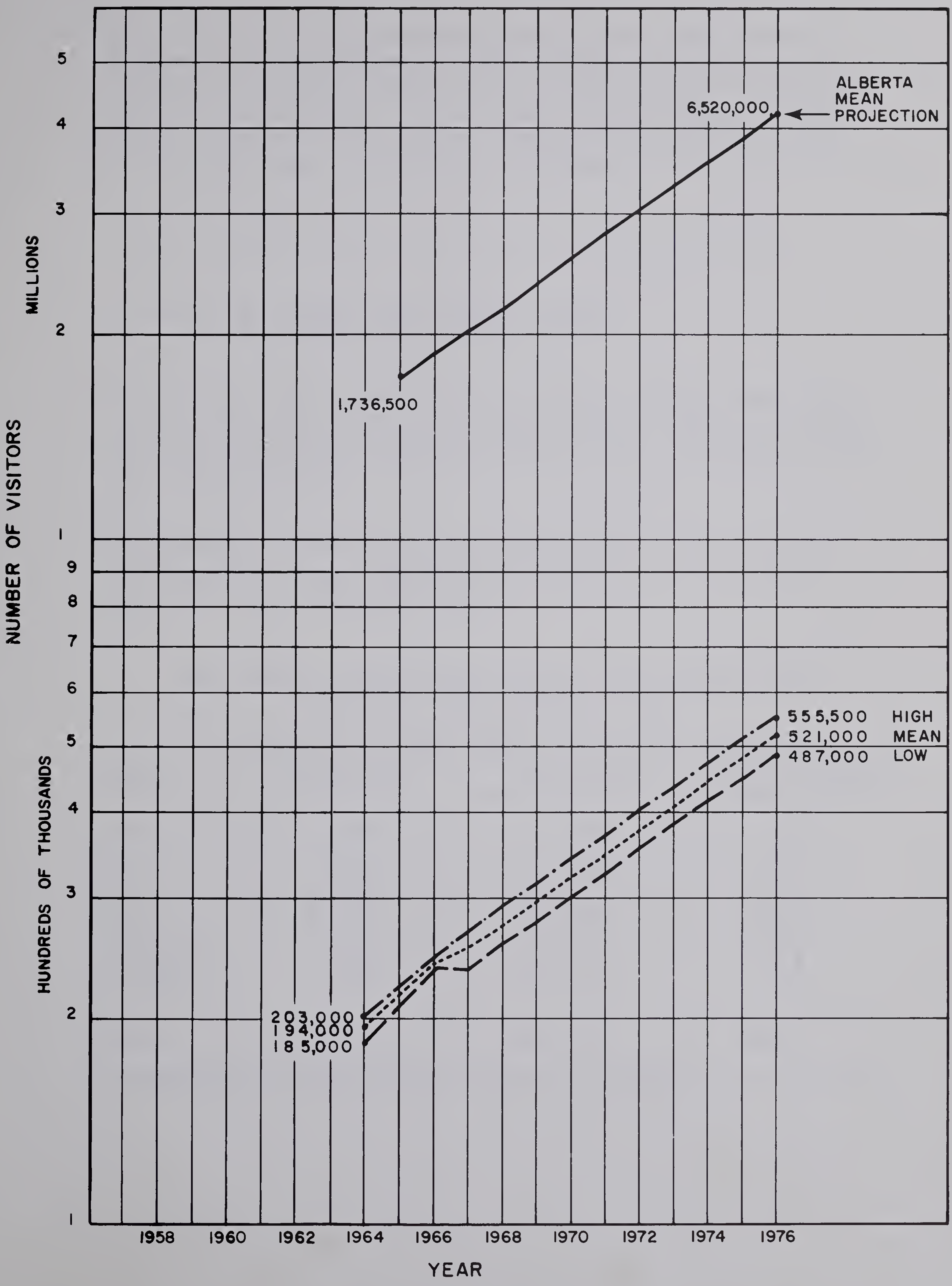
The number of room/nights offered by the 70 rooms during the June to September (122 days) period, is 8,540. The 75 per cent average occupancy figure indicates a peak demand of 6,405 units during the summer season, accommodating about 14,400 person/nights (at an average of 2.25 persons per room).[14] Less than 7 per cent of the potential person/nights (1966 mean estimate 244,512--see Volume 2, Appendix A) is realized by the hotel/motel industry in the Crowsnest Pass. This percentage will be reduced further after the number of commercial travellers and persons travelling for other than vacation and recreation purposes is calculated.

Occupancy figures for the approximately 100 campsites now available in the Pass, could not be obtained. A 75 per cent average occupancy during the camping season (July 1 to September 5--67 days) would add an additional 18,090 person/nights (at 3.6 persons per campsite)[15] to the overnight stays in the Pass and bring the total number of overnight stays (= person/nights) to 15. That figure is expressed as a percentage of the total potential market.

2.5 - Projection of Travel Through the Pass

For the years in which estimates could be made, the total number of travellers through the Crowsnest Pass represented between 12 and 13 per cent of the total number of visitors to the Province of Alberta. The mean was 12.4 per cent. For lack of other data, a preliminary projection based on the assumption that the relationship between the tourists travelling through the Crowsnest Pass and the out-of-province visitors to Alberta is constant (at 12.4 per cent), as illustrated in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TOURISTS TRAVELLING THROUGH THE CROWSNEST PASS, 1964 — 1976



The projection is related to projections made earlier for the total attendance at the three national parks located in Alberta, and for the number of out-of-province visitors to Alberta. It is based on the average annual growth rate of 8.3 per cent. Further calculations are based on the mean projection in Figure 3.

2.6 - The Crowsnest Pass Summer Market

The sources used to develop the annual projections permit logical derivation of the summer markets from the annual figures by applying monthly traffic data and weekend-weekday travel ratios.

The monthly variations in the 1966 tourist flow through the Crowsnest Pass, illustrated by Figure 8 in Volume 2, Appendix A, is tabulated below:

THE MONTHLY VARIATIONS IN THE 1966 TOURIST FLOW
THROUGH THE CROWSNEST PASS

Month	Tourist Traffic Vehicles	Tourist Traffic Persons*	Percentage of Total Traffic
April	2,580	7,740	3.1
May	5,766	17,298	7.0
June	8,490	25,470	10.4
July	28,396	85,188	34.5
August	24,614	73,842	29.9
September	7,260	21,780	8.8
October	5,239	15,717	6.3
TOTAL	82,345	247,035	100.0

* Estimated average party size 3.0 persons.

The months of July and August account for 64.4 per cent of all tourist traffic, June, July, August and September (= summer season, 122 days) account for 83.6 per cent. Summer peaking in the Pass is considerably higher than the figure for Canadian interprovincial travel.

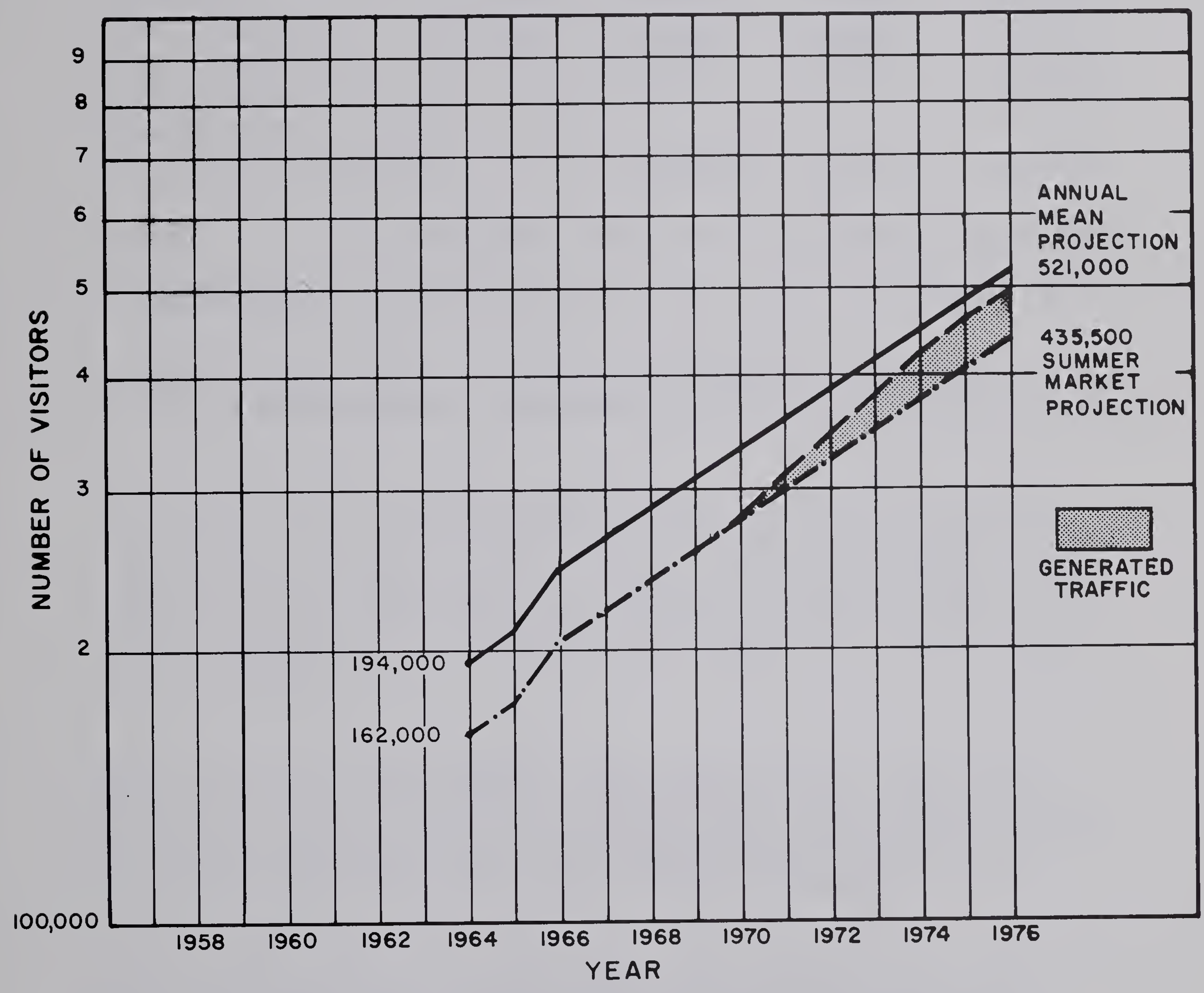
The sharp peaking of tourist travel during July and August could restrain the development and feasibility of accommodation and recreational facilities in the Pass. Development activities capable of lengthening the travel season will be an important requirement for a tourist industry with a sound economic base.

The summer market projection (illustrated in Figure 4) takes account of the increased drawing power of the Crowsnest Pass route if tourist and recreation developments similar to the ones for which economic feasibility calculations were made, are carried out. Detailed calculations of traffic generated because of increased drawing power of the recommended developments are included in Volume 2, Appendix B.

2.7 - The Alberta Skier Market

The number of skiers using Alberta ski areas grew at an average annual growth rate of 28.3 per cent, representing an average annual increment of 36,989 skiers between the 1960-1961 and 1966-1967 season. The following table lists the attendance figures in skier visits to the six major ski areas in the province which indicate trends in the provincial ski market.

FIGURE 4 THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TOURISTS TRAVELLING THROUGH THE CROWSNEST PASS DURING THE 122 DAYS SUMMER SEASON, 1964—1976



THE NUMBER OF SKIER VISITS TO SIX MAJOR SKI AREAS IN ALBERTA

Ski Area	1960-1961	1963-1964	1965-1966	1966-1967
Mount Norquay	25,113	46,834	45,910	61,524*
Sunshine	7,946	38,940	77,019	87,780
Lake Louise	31,146	38,215	38,182	58,535
Pigeon Mountain		12,000	16,000	17,000*
West Castle				16,300
Marmot Basin, Whistler's Mountain		20,000*	41,603	45,000*
TOTAL	64,202	117,490	218,482	286,140

* Estimated

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch.

The basis for projecting the number of skier visits to the six areas (see Figure 5) was a multiple regression analysis of factors (e.g., increases in population, per capita income, and amount of leisure time)[16] found to be closely related to the growth of skiing in the Western United States.

The factors do not explain why people ski. But their association with ski area attendances seem logical since a greater proportion of an increasing population will have both the money and the time to go skiing.

The majority of all skier visits to Alberta ski areas occur on weekends and holidays (about 73 per cent). However, the pressure on ski facilities (lifts and tows) on these days causes the percentage in relation to the total number of visits to decline. The trend is likely to continue. In 1976, about 55 per cent of the total demand is expected on weekends and holidays. As a result, the weekday market will grow in importance (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 5 THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SKIER VISITS TO SIX MAJOR ALBERTA SKI AREAS, 1964—1976

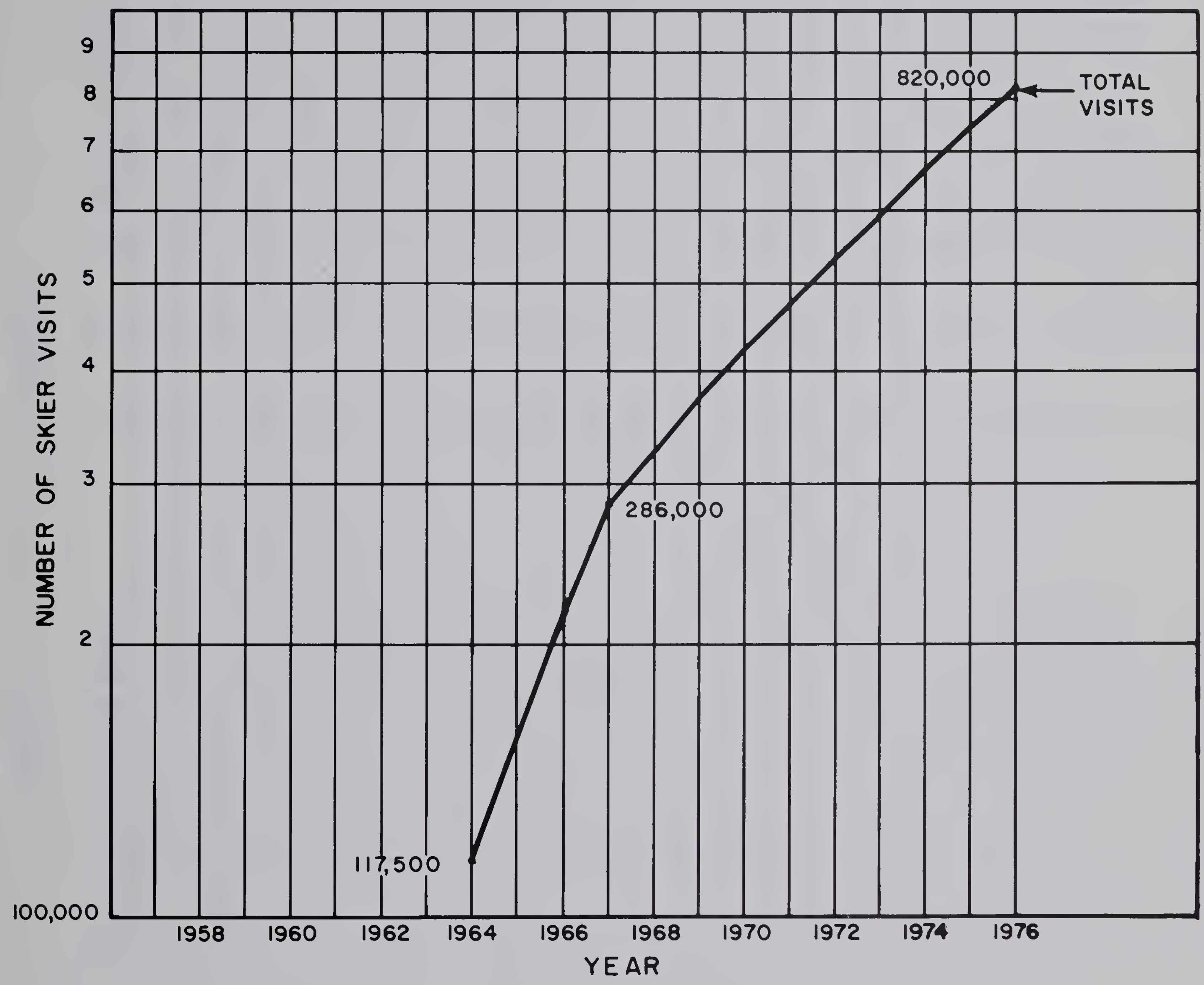
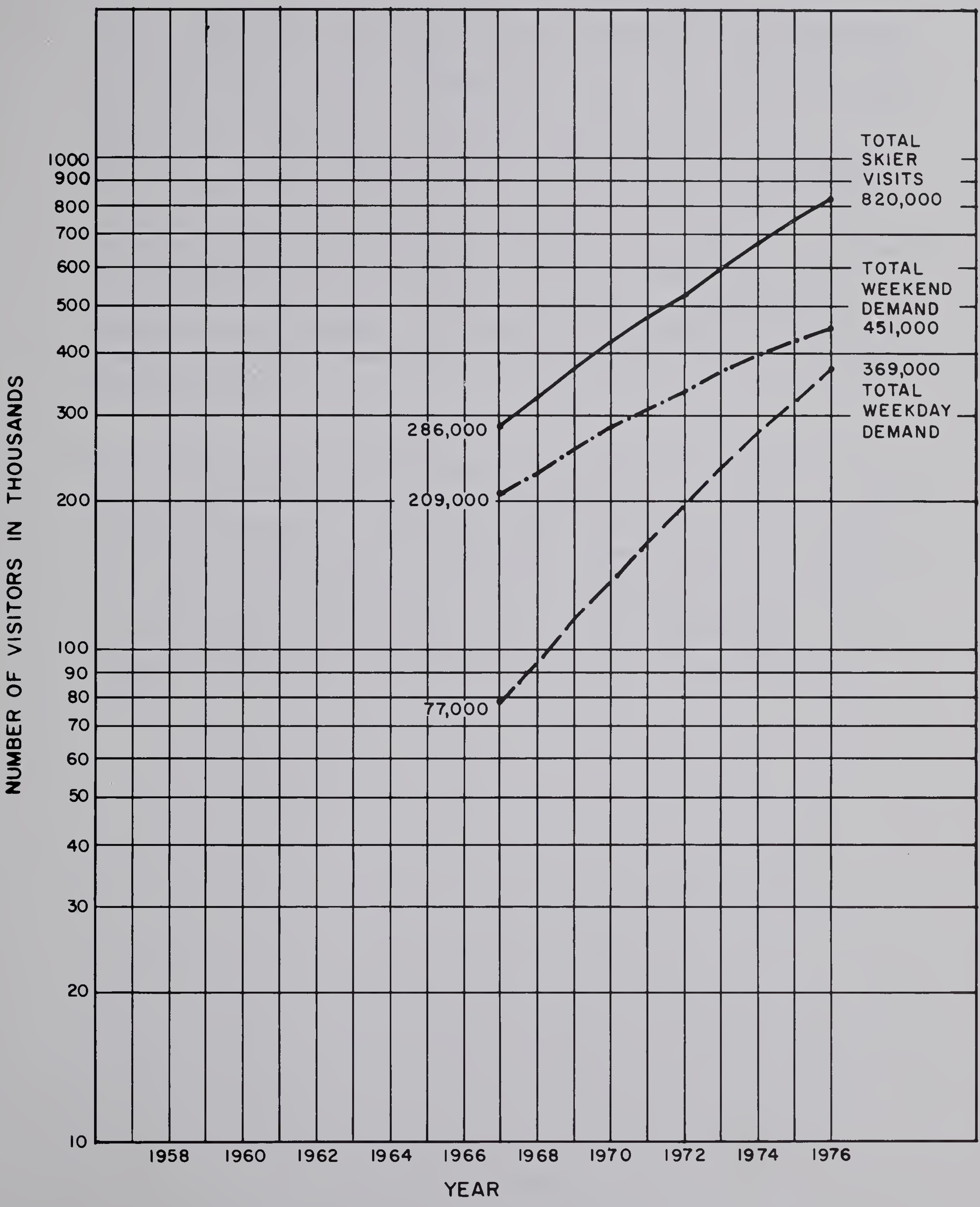


FIGURE 6 THE WEEKEND/HOLIDAY AND WEEKDAY SKIER VISITS PROJECTION FOR SIX MAJOR ALBERTA SKI AREAS

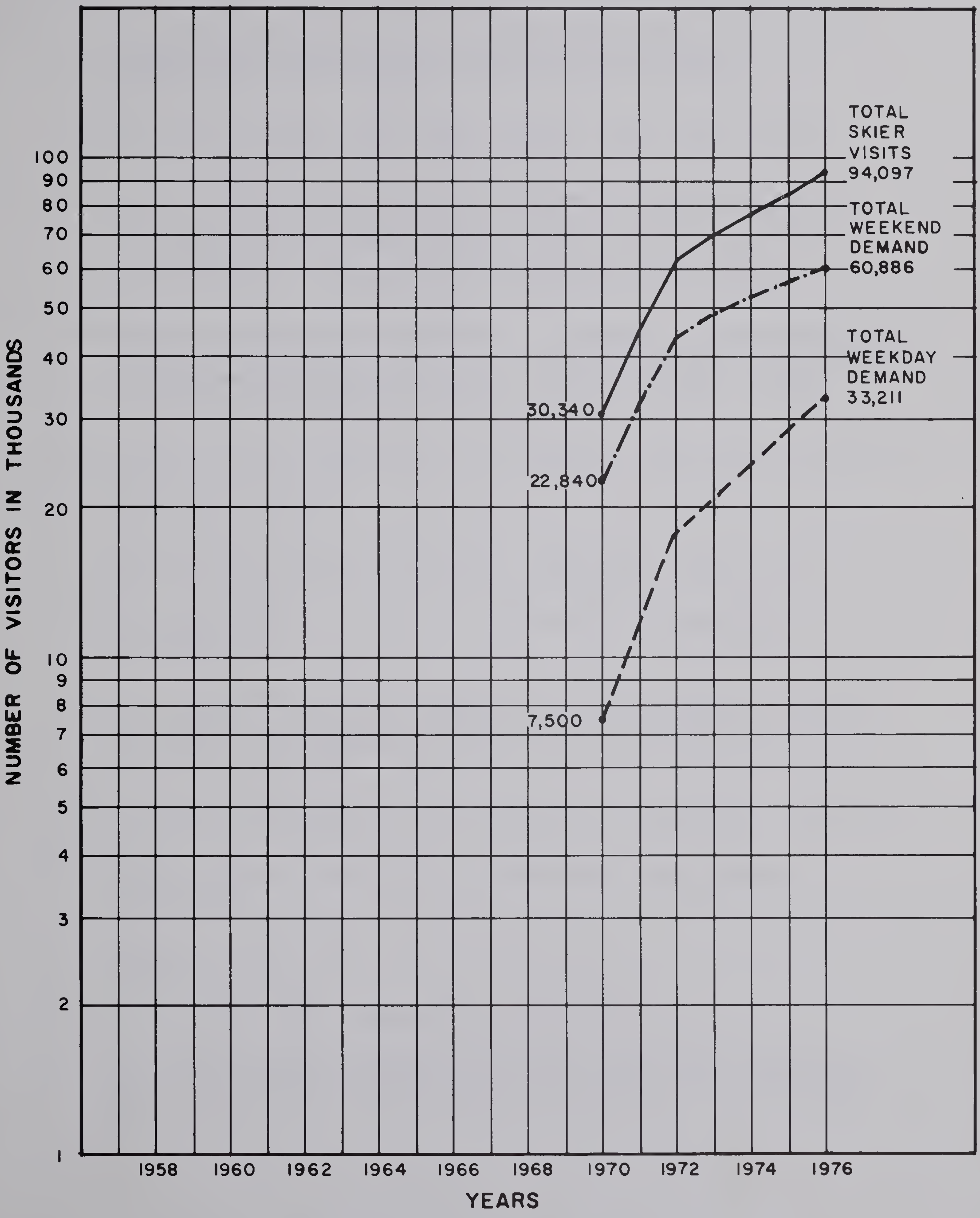


2.8 - The Crowsnest Pass Skier Market

It is difficult to calculate objectively the proportion of the Alberta skier market which might be attracted by a ski facility in the Crowsnest Pass. The data developed thus far are valid for six major Alberta ski areas only. They do not cover the complete skier market in the province. With the increasing popularity of vacation skiing, out-of-province skier visits may become a more important component of total demand. Also it must be assumed that established ski areas will undertake measures to accommodate the increase in skier demand for the next ten years. However, if snow conditions are adequate, Bluff Mountain holds substantial promise for an increasing number of skiers demanding high quality skiing and on-site conveniences.

The method used to estimate the potential drawing power of the Bluff Mountain ski development is based on a simple gravity analysis. Distance from the market is the most important factor in the equation (see Volume 2, Appendix A). The results indicate a potential drawing power for Bluff Mountain, when developed, equal to 60 per cent of the drawing power of the Lake Louise ski development. The projected Bluff Moutain attendance is illustrated in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7 THE WEEKEND/HOLIDAY AND WEEKDAY SKIER VISITS PROJECTION FOR THE BLUFF MOUNTAIN SKI AREA



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2 - *Vacation Travel Attitude Survey*, New York, 1967.

3 - Kates, Peat, Marwick, and Company - *Survey and Analysis of Non Resident Travel*, Plate 1: Report prepared for the Department of Industry and Development, Province of Alberta, April, 1967.

4 - McDonald Research Limited - *A Study of Interprovincial Travel in Canada*, Table 32: Report prepared for the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, Ottawa, 1966.

5 - Kates, Peat, Marwick, and Company - *op. cit.*, Plate 2.

6 - *Ibid.*, Plate 24.

7 - McDonald Research Limited - *op. cit.*, Table 32.

8 - See Appendix A, and J. W. Thorsell - *op. cit.*, Figure 4.

9 - See Appendix A, and Department of Highways, Province of Alberta - *Annual Traffic Analysis Reports*, Road Counter 28, 1966.

10 - Alberta Government Travel Bureau - *op. cit.*, Plate II.

11 - Kates, Peat, Marwick, and Company - *op. cit.*, Plate 24.

12 - *Ibid.*, Plate 26.

13 - J. W. Thorsell - *op. cit.*, page 14.

14 - The approximate number of people per room reported by hotel/motel owners during fieldwork in the Pass area.

15 - J. W. Thorsell - op. cit., page 19.

16 - R. B. Herrington - Skiing Trends and Opportunities in the Western United States, page 11: U.S. Forest Service Research Paper, INT-34, 1967.

3 - A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR RECREATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE CROWSNEST PASS

The summer market projection developed in the previous chapter concerns total traffic through the Crowsnest Pass, between June 1 and September 30. The winter market analysis produced a specific area ski attendance projection. Further calculations will be necessary to refine the summer projection into specific attendance figures, and to develop a concept of feasibility of the main recommendations made in Chapter 1, Site Analysis. They are based on exploitation of the summer market (or primary market) by the various developments, and include estimates of traffic generated. The detailed calculations can be found in Appendix B.

The major elements of the development programme are the historical complex and related accommodation and recreation facilities in the east end of the Pass, the summer recreation complex in the west end, and the ski development on Bluff Mountain. Although development of the east end will be a prerequisite for the feasibility of the summer complex, the latter is expected to create a market of its own and operating conditions that are at least in part independent from the development of the east end.

3.1 - Historical Complex

The elements of the complex are: (1) the Frank Slide, covering the entire area of the slide; (2) an historical town (1900 era) on the site of the old town of Frank; (3) a possible walking and riding trail through the Gold Creek canyon to the old townsite of Lille.

3.1.1 - The Frank Slide

The total land area involved is about 1,540 acres. About one-third of the land occupied by the slide is in public ownership. The remaining acreage can probably be assembled at a cost of $200 per acre. Close to 25,000 feet of trails are projected for adequate development of the slide as a geological and historical exhibit. The total development cost, including the land acquisition cost, is estimated at $300,000.

The annual operating expenditures, including maintenance and labour, will probably not exceed $6,000. The slide, as a component of the historical complex, will not produce an operating revenue.

3.1.2 - The Historical Town

The settlement in the Pass should be compact small town. It is visualised to resemble the old town of Frank in the period before the slide occurred (1903). The old town had a frontier appearance which mixed the western mining and pioneering atmosphere in a blend peculiar to the Pass area.

The reconstructed town should contain about 30 buildings grouped along Dominion Avenue and two or three short side streets. The total land area involved is 46 acres. Eighteen acres are required for the town, another 18 acres for landscaping around the town, and 10 acres for parking. The parking lot could also serve the parking requirements for the slide. The total land cost involved is around $18,400 ($400 per acre). Site preparation for the town (including water, sewer and electricity servicing, parking lot, and landscaped area around the

town, involves about $71,000. Construction and reconstruction of about 30 buildings, boardwalks, hitching racks, and street preparation, plus the acquisition of a number of antique cars, is expected to cost $1,369,000.

Two buildings are included in the cost calculations that were not part of the original town. The gate and administrative building, at the entrance of the town, houses the box offices, administration offices, and personnel quarters. It is estimated to cost about $75,000. The second building is a museum/visitor centre in which detailed attention is given to all aspects of the history of the Pass and surrounding area. The cost of this building, including the furnishings, is estimated at $150,000. Both these buildings should be constructed in a style which harmonizes with the town's architecture and observes modern building codes.

Total development cost, including land acquisition, is estimated at $1,823,000. Based on experience elsewhere, it is assumed that the construction time required to complete the historical town is five years. Assuming that actual construction will begin in 1969, the first full operating season will be in 1974. The attendance calculations are made for 1969.

Attendance Estimates - The assumed operating season is 122 days, and includes the full months of June, July, August and September. Based on the experience of similar developments in Canada, the Crowsnest Pass historical complex is expected to attract about 25 per cent of the tourists travelling through the Pass in 1974. This would bring close to 93,000 people to the historical town in that year. The traffic generated by the historical complex, will add another 72,300 visitors in 1974 (total 165,300). The town's operating expenditures are expected to be between $300,000 and $400,000 in 1974. The labour component of these expenditures will be about $145,000. An entrance fee of $2.50 for adults and $1.00 for children would raise $328,200 in 1974. A further $20,000 to $30,000 per year could be realized from renting commercial floor space to concessionaires.

3.1.3 - The Gold Creek Trail

About 20,000 feet of trail must be constructed, including a number of small footbridges, at an estimated cost of $14,000. The maintenance costs would be about $1,500 per year. The trail would be accessible from the historical town and Highway 3. Its operating expenditures could be part of the expenditures of the historical town.

3.1.4 - Economic Impact

The full-time and seasonal jobs created by the historical complex will be equivalent to 30.55 full-time jobs earning a total of about $227,000. The expected average length of stay in the complex is two hours. During this time, at least $55,000 will be spent on goods and services, other than lodging, food, drink, transportation and recreation. Almost every visitor is expected to require a meal during his visit, resulting in a total expenditure of about $330,600 for meals in 1974.

Once the visitor is inside the complex, the opportunity to draw attention to other attractions and facilities in the Pass area, and in the province, must not be overlooked. The quality and authenticity of reconstruction will have a most important effect on the promotion of hotel/motel and other recreational facilities in the Pass area. The number of people staying overnight will depend to a great extent on the job done by the historical complex. With an average length of stay of two hours, and an average travel day length of eight hours, it should be possible to induce 25 per cent of the visitors to stay overnight in the area. This ratio assumes an equal distribution of visitors over the day. The fieldwork carried out during the last week in June indicated that two daily travel peaks seem to exist, one in mid-morning, and one in mid-afternoon. Effective penetration of the mid-afternoon peak could result in a propensity to stay overnight in the Pass that is higher than 25 per cent.

The resulting demand for hotel/motel rooms is summarized in the following table. It includes the demand based on the projection of the present usage, and the demand created by generated traffic. Two average length of stay assumptions are made.

THE DEMAND FOR HOTEL/MOTEL ROOMS IN THE CROWSNEST PASS, 1967-1976

Year	(1) Average Length of Stay 1 Night	(2) Average Length of Stay Increasing to 1.68 Nights	(3) Mean (1+2) : 2
1967	67	67	67
1968	72	78	75
1969	77	91	84
1970	86	110	98
1971	97	134	115
1972	112	166	139
1973	138	218	178
1974	183	307	245
1975	196	329	262
1976	211	354	282

The mean projection is used for further assessment of economic impact. If the mean number of rooms (column 3) is provided, the following average occupancy figures can be expected:

August weekends (design peak)	100 per cent
August weekdays	80 per cent
July weekends (congestion)	100 per cent
July weekdays	95 per cent
June weekends	30 per cent
June weekdays	22 per cent
September weekends	25 per cent
September weekdays	17 per cent

If the travel pattern, measured for the Pass in 1966 (see Figure 8 in Appendix A) is maintained in the near future, the low occupancy averages in June and September will result in marginal hotel/motel operations. It is particularly important that the occupancy figures for these months are improved. The historical complex could play an important role in lengthening the travel season through special exhibits in June and September. The construction of a heated mineral pool near the present sulphur spring would also boost travel during these months. Hunting promotion could have a considerable effect on average occupancies in November and December. Finally, the possibility of a major ski development could make the year-round hotels/motels very profitable.

Not all of the hotel/motel rooms required in the near future are the result of the development of the historical complex. However, to simplify calculations it is assumed that all new room requirements from 1971 on are part of the economic impact of the complex. The calculations are made for 1974, the expected first year of full operation of the complex.

About 175 new hotel/motel rooms will be required by 1974. The hotel/motel ratio will probably be close to 1:2, or about 60 hotel type rooms and 115 motel type rooms. One employee per 2 hotel rooms is required during the peak months of July and August and one employee for every 4 hotel rooms during the rest of the year. One employee is required for every 4 motel rooms during July and August, and one employee for every 8 motel rooms during the rest of the year. All hotel rooms are open year-round. About 60 of the new motel rooms are expected to be closed in the winter.

About 60 employees will be required in the hotels and motels during July and August, 30 employees during June and September. During the rest of the year, 22.5 people will be employed in the hotel and motel industry in 1974.

These figures are equal to about 35 full-time jobs. The total 1974 earnings by these employees are estimated at $200,000. The employment and earnings between 1971 and 1976, expressed in full-time jobs, are as follows:

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS - HOTELS/MOTELS IN THE CROWSNEST PASS 1971 to 1976

	Historical Complex		Hotels/Motels		Total	Total
Year	Jobs	Earnings	Jobs	Earnings	Jobs	Earnings
1971	10	$ 62,780	9	$ 52,400	19	$115,180
1972	15	99,120	14	82,900	29	182,020
1973	20	139,120	20	122,000	40	261,120
1974	31	227,000	29	200,000	60	427,000
1975	31	238,350	31	210,600	62	448,950
1976	31	250,260	35	248,100	66	498,360

Detailed estimates of capital costs, operating expenditures and revenues for a new 40 room hotel are included in Appendix B. Construction of a hotel of this size or larger will not become economically feasible until 1972.

The total expenditures by summer tourists staying overnight in the Pass are difficult to estimate. About $330,600 is expected to be spent inside the historical complex on food and drink, and at least $55,000 on goods and services other than lodging, food, drinks, transportation, recreation and entertainment. About 25 per cent of the visitors to the historical area are expected to stay overnight. That creates 33,800 person/nights. Many visitors will make use of the hotel/motel and camping facilities in the east end of the Pass. Others will stay overnight in the summer recreation complex projected in the west end of the Crowsnest Pass. As will be shown later, 60 of the 175 new rooms required by 1974 are projected as part of the summer recreation complex, and 140 of the new campsites. For these, separate economic impact calculations will be made.

About 115 new hotel/motel rooms and 50 new campsites are projected for the east end of the Pass area in 1974. The average rate per room is set at $14.50 per night. Based on occupancy calculations for various months of the summer season (see page 21) room revenues will be about $116,000. The camping fee per night is set at $3.50 for 1974. The revenue for the 50 new sites in that year will be about $12,200. Based on the findings of the non-resident travel study,[1] it is estimated that an additional $176,506 is spent (outside the historical complex) on meals, refreshments and groceries, $13,872 on transportation expenses, and about $50,000 on recreation, entertainment, goods and services. The total expenditures by tourists in the east end of the Pass area during the summer (4 months) of 1974 will be about $754,900. This figure includes all expenses except the fees charged at the entrance of the historical complex (totalling $328,200).

About 116 new campsites will be required in 1974 as a result of the increased demand created by the historical complex. In addition, the present supply of 100 sites will have grown to 172 sites.

Lost Lemon Park will be able to create 50 new sites. For the other 140 new sites, about 35 acres must be set aside. Apart from the expansion opportunity available at Lost Lemon Park, no suitable space exists for the development of high quality camping areas close to present urban centres in the eastern part of the Pass. The new sites could be part of a larger summer recreation development projected in the scenic western section of the Crowsnest Pass. A second area (located next to the small lake formed by the Crowsnest River inside the extended forest reserve), might be suitable for camping development at a later date.

It is desirable to locate many or all of the hotel/motel rooms that are open all year, in or near the present urban areas. The activity generated by these establishments will enhance the general activity of the urban

centres and contribute to community formation. For maximum impact on the traveller along Highway 3, the establishments should be concentrated in one part of the Pass area.

An important part, if not all, of the new seasonal hotel/ motel development should be located outside the urban areas. It should relate to other seasonal activities such as camping, boating, golfing, moutaineering, hiking, horseback riding, outdoor sports, etc.

Such development could form a natural overflow of the higher density area in the eastern part of the Pass with its own drawing power. It would be summer-based, with high occupancies in fixed accommodation and campsites during the months of July and August. It would attract people who are unable to find accommodation in the eastern part of the Pass, as well as those who prefer activity-based summer recreation. Occupancy problems might be expected in the months of June and September unless the traffic pattern illustrated in Figure 8, Appendix A, can be modified.

The elements of the summer recreation complex would be: chalet type accommodation, camping sites, summer cottages, a swimming pool, an outdoor sports area, including tennis courts, badminton courts, horseshoe pits, shuffleboards, lawn bowling, a boating dock (floating), a boat launch, a raft lagoon, a riding stable, an archery and skeet range, a golf course (18 holes), a restaurant, and a small commercial development containing two or three stores. The acreage involved in the complex is about 300, including 130 acres for an 18 hole golf course. The railway right-of-way, traversing the selected area, will occupy 34 acres.

About 60 new seasonal hotel/motel type rooms will be required to accommodate the August weekend peaks in 1974. A suitable location of the rooms is in the Allison Creek Basin near the Crowsnest Lake. In that area, a chalet

type of facility could relate to activities such as boating, raft riding on the Crowsnest River, golfing, etc. It should be close to campsites projected there and readily accessible from Highway 3 (see Plate 3). In addition, it would be close to the potential cottage development along the wind-free shores of Crowsnest Lake. The complete complex, including chalet, camping and recreational activities would be best developed by one owner. Its economic base would be the drawing power of the historical complex in the eastern part of the Pass. The traffic that would be generated by an integrated summer recreation complex of this nature itself is calculated in Appendix B. It indicates the feasibility of a chalet containing a total of 100 rooms, and about 200 campsites in 1974. The total investment in the complex by 1974 would be about $1.3 million. A detailed breakdown of the estimated capital costs, operating expenditures and revenues are included in Appendix B.

The employment created by the summer recreation complex during the 1974 season is equivalent to about 14.8 full-time jobs, for total earnings of $113,076. Revenues from rooms and camping sites will total around $173,000. Expenditures on meals, refreshments and groceries are estimated at about $238,190, on transportation $18,720, on recreation and entertainment $88,590, and on other goods and services about $50,000. Total estimated expenditures in 1974 is $568,500.

3.2 - Ski Development

The total investment that is economically feasible within the forecast period (to 1976) is about $1,308,000. This would pay for the construction of one chairlift from the base of the mountain to the top, another chairlift of about half this length, and a T-bar of moderate proportions. The expenditure would also cover slope and trail construction, an activity centre, parking, and a variety of equipment. If the development of the southwest slopes

of Bluff Moutain is not possible because of unfavourable meteorological conditions, the north and east slopes of the moutain offer excellent prospects. However, the extra investments required to develop these slopes (i.e., an open road) and the development restrictions governing building in the forest reserves, are severe drawbacks. Also, the physical relationship between the hotels and motels required for the summer tourist trade and the base of the ski lifts will be weakened. Under these circumstances, a ski development in the Crowsnest Pass may not be able to attract the full market calculated in Chapter 2 and Appendix A.

The economic impact of a ski development in the Crowsnest Pass would be considerable. In the 1974-1975 season, the equivalent of twelve full-time jobs would be created, earning $93,000. Most important, it would bring enough overnight visitors to the Pass area during the skiing months (December through April) and put the year-round hotel/motel industry on a sound economic footing. Occupancies of 100 per cent will be registered on most weekends during the skiing period, weekday average occupancies would be boosted by 25 to 40 per cent. The total number of skier visits in the 1974-1975 season would be 85,712. The average daily expenditure per skier according to the findings of R. B. Herrington[2] was $20.54. Assuming an average annual growth rate in daily expenditure of 5 per cent, the average skier will spend about $30 per day in the 1974-1975 season. The total expenditures by skiers in the Pass during this season are estimated to reach $2,136,280. Of this amount, about $471,420 will be required for lift tickets. The remaining $1,664,860 would be spent on lodging, meals, entertainment, equipment, transportation, etc.

3.3 - Other Recreation Development

The development cost of a walking trail through the recommended forest reserve extension would be about $55,000. This amount includes $20,000 for about six miles of trails (including benches), $30,000 for a number of footbridges over the Crowsnest and other rivers and creeks, and $5,000 for a parking lot adjacent to Highway 3 at the east end of the extension. A provincial camping site could be developed near the small lake formed by the Crowsnest River. These sites would be directly competitive with the camping sites that are part of the summer recreation complex. They could be operated by the developer of this complex. It is most important with regard to the feasibility of the summer complex that camping fees are charged comparable to the fees charged by private enterprise.

A second phase development is the preparation of part of the coal mine just north of Blairmore for mine tours. Although this project would be a private enterprise venture, it could be tied in with the mining section of the museum in the historical town. About $500,000 would be involved in this reconstruction job. The parking lot used by skiers in the winter would be adequate to serve the mine tour clientele in the summer. About 25 per cent of the visitors to the historical complex could be attracted, or about 47,000 people in 1974.

A heated mineral pool in the vicinity of the historical complex is also considered as a second phase project. The construction costs are estimated between $75,000 and $125,000. Its feasibility would be related to the development of the historical town. Calculations of potential market penetration could not be made because of lack of data.

Summer cottage development along the wind-free shores of Crowsnest Lake has been attempted a number of times. The attempts have not succeeded, because the lake is unsuitable for swimming and water skiing. The creation of a variety of outdoor recreation facilities in the summer complex could make development of the lakeshore for cottages more attractive. A total of 80 lots, with a lake frontage of 50 feet each, would be feasible. Development costs would average about $700 per lot. The price per cottage could be in the $4,000 to $5,000 region.

3.4 - Direct and Indirect Employment Created by the New Developments in the Crowsnest Pass

In 1974, a total of 74.8 new full-time jobs will be created by the historical complex, the new hotel/motel development, campsites in the east of the Pass, and the summer recreation complex. In 1975, the total will grow to 76.8, and in 1976 to 80.8. These new jobs are all directly related to new recreation development.

To estimate the full impact of the recommended developments on the economy of the Crowsnest Pass, the application of an employment multiplier to the totals is required. The multiplier developed by the University of Utah[3] in their research study of a proposed national park seems most appropriate for application in the Pass. It indicates that for every job created directly in the tourist industry, another 0.9 job will be created. If this multiplier is valid for the Pass area, a total of 142 new jobs will be created in the Pass by 1974 as a result of the development of the historical complex and the summer recreation complex.

If meteorological conditions permit development of Bluff Mountain for skiing, the equivalent of 12 full-time jobs would be created in the 1974-1975 winter season. No employment multiplier calculation comparable to the one

used for summer recreation is available. It is obvious that ski development would be a very important factor in sustaining the employment requirements of hotels and motels.

An income multiplier is difficult to apply. If the developers of hotel/motel and camping facilities are residents of the Pass, much of the direct personal income created will be re-spent in the area and the multiplier will be higher. If outside capital develops the bulk of the new requirements, the multiplier will be low. Direct personal income created consists of wages and salaries (totaling $540,076 in the summer of 1974) plus the profit made on all tourist expenditures (totalling $1,323,400 in the summer of 1974). Assuming that average profit of 25 per cent is made on tourist expenditures, the total direct personal income created by 1974 is about $870,900. The indirect income, according to the research by Edminster and Harline,[4] equals 80 cents for every dollar of direct income created (income multiplier of 1.8). If this ratio would be applicable to the Crowsnest Pass, the total income (direct and indirect) created in the summer of 1974 through successive spending cycles of the tourist dollars, would amount to about $1,567,600.

Lack of data prevented similar calculations with respect to the income multiplier related to skiing. However, it is clear that ski development in the Pass would be a strong factor in the creation of indirect personal income.

CHAPTER 3 - REFERENCES

1 - Kates, Peat, Marwick, and Company - *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, Appendix F, Table 39.

2 - R. B. Herrington, *op. cit.*, Table 26.

3 - R. R. Edminster, and O. L. Harline - *An Economic Study of the Proposed Canyonlands National Park and Related Recreational Resources*, page 11. Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah, 1962.

4 - *Ibid.*, page 12.

4 - THE STRATEGY OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE CROWSNEST PASS

The general layout and design of facilities recommended in the Crowsnest Pass are consistent with the characteristics of recreation demand and the natural capabilities of the sites. They allow for flexibility that can take advantage of opportunities to capitalize on changes in demand. They also have the capacity to lengthen the travel season.

4.1 - The Initial Investment

The nature of the recommended initial investment in an historical complex minimizes the hazards of most recreation businesses with short seasons. The goal of this investment is to create conditions for private development which permit maximum flexibility in the providing of recreation facilities in the Pass. The initial investment will serve the important functions of catalyst and basic attraction, and as a basis for continuing development of the recreation resources of the area.

4.2 - Utilization of Facilities

The number of facilities included in the development programme for the Crowsnest Pass would be used fully during the peak tourist season. The main difficulty is operating profitable overnight facilities in an extremely short season. There are approximately 70 days in which very high occupancy rates may be expected. Beyond the 70 days, the rates fall off drastically. The economic feasibility of overnight accommodation depends on the economic operation of such facilities during the short season. The level and nature of the capital investments are of crucial importance in this context.

Overnight facilities containing 20 rooms or less are uneconomical to operate. The ratio between operating revenues and expenditures improves in establishments with 30 to 40 rooms. Of the 170 to 180 new hotel/motel rooms required in the Crowsnest Pass by 1974, 60 are recommended as seasonal motel type units, 60 as year-round motel type units, and about 60 in a year-round hotel. The pro forma calculations carried out for a 40 room motor hotel (see Volume 2, Appendix B) indicate that the construction of a new facility of this size will become economically feasible in 1972. In the meantime, the existing hotel industry will have an opportunity to grow with the market by expanding and improving their establishments.

4.3 - Land Use Control

The success of the development of recreation facilities of wide and flexible appeal in the Crowsnest Pass will depend in no small measure on the land acquisition and control policies developed. Experience elsewhere[1] demonstrated that desirable development can be accomplished where effective planning and control is maintained. The leadership exercised by the regional authority responsible for planning in the Pass area will be most important in this respect. The key areas in which it is particularly important to ensure active land use control are in the environment of the recommended historical complex, along Highway 3 outside the communities of Bellevue, Frank, Blairmore and Coleman, and in the area of the Crowsnest Lake summer recreation complex and the Bluff Mountain ski complex.

With the exception of parts of Bluff Mountain, the land area most suitable for ski facilities is in private ownership. Much of this land needs to be assembled before development can take place. It would provide an important stimulus to the development of ski facilities if the province could provide assistance to the private developer

in the process of land assembling. If so required, the province should also consider to open the area for development by providing an access road. The costs of an access road would be fully justified by the impact of the ski development on the economy of the Pass region. Easements for ski lifts and trails over provincial forest lands on Bluff Mountain should be provided at a reasonable annual fee. Land assembly assistance should also be available from the province to the developer of the summer recreation complex in the west end of the Pass.

The permits issued for construction of hotel/motel facilities, the ski lodge and other buildings in the base area of the ski lifts, the summer recreation complex, and eventual summer residences, should encourage the use of materials that are produced or can be obtained locally. They should stimulate high-quality buildings, modern layout and design, and discourage any form of strip development. They should also encourage use of outside elevations that are in harmony with other buildings and the landscape.

4.4 - Tourist Information Service

Tourists tend to stay longer when they are fully informed about the type and location of events, activities, facilities and services that are available. They are also more likely to make return visits. The museum/visitor centre provides an opportunity to inform the tourists visiting the historical complex about the other attractions of the Pass area, accommodation, etc. Another information centre would seem logical at the western entrance to the Pass, perhaps as part of the summer recreation complex. Stores, restaurants, hotels and motels are also useful dissemination points for tourist information.

This service will be vital to the tourist industry in the Pass and should be improved and kept up-to-date continuously.

The stress should be placed on providing the kind of services and information that will make it as simple as possible for each tourist or tourist party to find what they want and how to get there. The achievement of this objective will require continuing cooperation and coordination between the tourist industry in the Pass, the Alberta Government Travel Bureau and the Departments of Lands and Forests, and Highways.

To reduce the need for private billboards and to facilitate tourist travel, a small number of highway pull-off areas should be strategically located along Highway 3 in the Crowsnest Pass. A large location map could be installed in these areas, together with brochure and pamphlet dispensers which provide full information about tourist attractions, services, and establishments. Also, a summary of information provided by the Alberta Accommodation Guide for the Pass area should be availabe at these points. The highway pull-offs should be attractively designed and could relate to picnic sites, scenic lookouts, etc.

4.5 - Camping and Trailer Parks

Facilities and services for camping and trailer parties are presently provided by the province and a private operator. The choice available to the user ranges from wilderness campsites with the minimum amount of services to road site trailer locations.

A fully serviced campsite requires an investment of at least $800. With the level of investment, an operator would need a return of about $3 per party/night over the two month season. The provincial sites can be used free of charge at present. This implies that camping is being subsidized at the expense of other accommodation as well as private campground operators. More realistic pricing of public facilities would enable private developers to develop high quality areas profitably.

The funds used to create provincial camping sites could be used more profitably with respect to tourist development in the Pass. It is recommended that campground development by the province be given a low priority.

4.6 - Government Loans and Assistance

Government loans to small business enterprises in the tourist industry are available through the Industrial Development Bank. The bank will make loans to operators only when no alternate source of credit is available. Each application is considered on its own merits. The amount of credit that is available to any one business is determined after a study of the operation by bank officials. The Industrial Development Bank was established as a lending agency of last resort for small business operators. Several operators in the Pass indicated that they are using its services.

The general record of financial performance in the recreation industry does not appear strong. Bankers and loan institutions, as well as government agencies, consider recreation a high risk industry. Private investment in the recreation field in Canada has been small over the past decade.

Developers leasing land have had limited success in obtaining financing. Although exceptions can be found, other security or guarantees have been required in many cases.

The Government of Alberta may consider to initiate a programme of loans for tourist business operators similar to programmes existing in several other provinces. The purpose of such a programme should be to provide a source of credit for building and expansion of accommodation and recreation facilities, and to supplement other sources of credit.

A study should be made by the Provincial Government of the possibilities of obtaining funds from such sources as the Area Development Agency, the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act, the Winter Works programme, etc. for development of recreation.

There is a need for technical assistance for the owners and operators of tourist attractions and accommodation in the Crowsnest Pass to help them expand management capacity, deal with problems on location, expansion, construction, long-range planning, financing, manpower training and utilization. The tourist industry could develop to a multi-million dollar industry in this area, but it requires technical servicing just as agriculture, fishing, or manufacturing. Well qualified technical personnel could be employed by the province to assist in planning of recreation developments, implementation and advice on policy matters related to both public and private aspects of recreation.

4.7 - Pricing Policies

The major problem facing individual firms and the industry as a whole is that a heavy demand exists for a very short season. The revenues obtained for the peak period may not be sufficient to return adequate incomes. There is a problem to accommodate the peak load and the industry should price accordingly. The following basic policies could be adopted:

(1) - Raise prices during the season to increase revenues. This is not expected to have an important effect on the occupancy figures during the peak travel season. It would increase revenues and allow for development of higher quality operations.

(2) - Establish a schedule of reduced rates in June and September, and the remaining months of the year. These rates should be widely publicized by the industry to complement the advertising by the Alberta Government Travel Bureau.

4.8 - Extending the Tourist Season

The problem of a short travel season will require careful attention. The pricing policies, special exhibits in the historical complex, and a heated mineral pool will contribute to the lengthening of the travel season. However, there is a need to break the existing seasonal cycle. It can be done through a coordinated programme of action in which the Provincial Government in cooperation with local enterprise must exert the role of leadership. The present tourist advertising campaigns have the effect of attracting more visitors to Alberta in the July-August period. In view of the heavy peak load on the tourist industry, the Alberta Travel Bureau should consider to shift the emphasis of its advertising. The new emphasis could focus on specialized markets and aim at extending the season into early June and late September, or longer. More visitors during these two periods will have a more favourable impact on the industry and the economy than an increase in the numbers of mid-season visitors.

It is evident that a large portion of the visitors coming to the Alberta mountain region enjoy touring and are there primarily for that purpose. The advantages of visiting and touring in late May, June, September and early October could be highlighted in advertising aimed at families and groups not tied to the school year. This includes young families with no children, or pre-school age children, or couples whose children have grown up. The off-season rates for accommodation could be a major attraction for these people.

4.9 - Concluding Comments and Recommendations

Examination of the potential of recreation development in the Crowsnest Pass and on-site inspection of the physical capabilities demonstrated an efficacy of recreation facility development. It is clear that development of recreation resources should meet specified objectives and should follow the dictates of both market and site conditions.

A number of areas have been pointed out and recommendations have been made for their development. The first step towards exploitation of the recreation potential in the Crowsnest Pass would be the construction of the historical complex. Major investment by private enterprise and their phasing will depend on the phasing of public investment. An early start of the research and construction of the complex is recommended.

The gradual development of the complex will provide the existing tourist industry with an opportunity to adjust to a growing tourist market. This will be most important in generating and sustaining the local interest and co-operation required to make the development a success. Local participation in the growing industry will produce a relatively higher income multiplier and create higher overall benefits to the entire Pass area.

The extension of the Crowsnest Forest Reserve as indicated on Plate 3 should also be undertaken as soon as possible. This step is recommended to preserve an area of natural parkland against further invasion of urban and industrial uses. Construction of trails and the parking lot could be phased over a number of years.

If land assembly assistance by the Provincial Government is feasible, it is recommended that steps be undertaken

soon to assemble at least 300 acres of land in the Allison Creek Basin north of Highway 3 near Crowsnest Lake. This would be most important in ascertaining that the development of a summer recreation complex, as outlined in this report, takes place within the boundaries of the study area. The province might initiate detailed planning and design studies to determine accurately the area required for the complex.

Land assembly assistance in the Bluff Mountain area needs to be guided by the results of the meteorological studies on the mountain. It is recommended that snow depth, wind velocity and temperature studies are undertaken on Bluff Mountain beginning in the winter of 1967-1968. Two to four years of observation may be adequate since the data may be correlated to observations that have been made for many years in other places in the Pass area. It is recommended that the studies are undertaken in cooperation with a ski area consultant.

If only the east and north slopes of Bluff Mountain prove suitable for ski development, it is recommended that the province construct an access road to the area indicated as "alternative base area ski development" in Plate 2. This road should branch off Highway 3 in the vicinity of the town of Frank to ensure maximum interaction between the ski area and the lodging and recreation facilities in the communities. In case the southwest slopes of Bluff Mountain prove suitable for ski development, it is recommended that the base area of the ski development be established just north of the town of Blairmore.

The active interest of the province in the construction of a heated mineral swimming pool and the reconstruction of part of the Blairmore mine is also recommended. Speculation in land following the start of the historical complex might preclude the development of a heated pool. It is suggested that the land in the vicinity of the sulphur spring is acquired by the province and held for the specfic purpose of a mineral pool

Reconstruction of part of the Blairmore mine will be a capital intensive project. The proposed link between the museum in the historical complex and the mine will probably prove a significant factor in increasing the average length of stay of visitors in the Pass. Exploitation of this link may involve provincial participation in the recommendations in the form of research and financial assistance.

The urban renewal study projected for the communities in the Crowsnest Pass should take account of the recreation potential of parts of the area in its land use plan. Tourism may develop into a prime industry in the Pass and contribute significantly to the diversification of its economic base. The areas set aside for lodging and recreation development should be physically and economically attractive, as well as readily accessible from Highway 3. It is considered important to the future of recreation in the Crowsnest Pass that departmental policies affecting the use of land are coordinated and administered by a single body.

CHAPTER 4 - REFERENCES

1 - Best known in this respect is the experience of the Tennessee Valley Authority. See also, Acres Research and Planning Limited - Development Planning for Prince Edward Island, Recreation-Tourism Report, Toronto, 1967.